

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 VO-03 SCA-01 OPR-02 SY-05

AID-05 /091 W

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R 261446Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7868

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 07620

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR FR CB US

SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS OF INDOCHINA

SUMMARY: THE FRENCH THOUGHT THAT THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA WAS CHANGING VERY RAPIDLY, AND THE FRENCH POSITION WAS EVOLVING CORRESPONDINGLY. GRUNK OFFICIALS RECENTLY RETURNED FROM PEKING SPOKE WITH OPTIMISM OF THEIR PROSPECTS OVER THE COMING MONTHS, AND SAID THAT THEY WOULD NOT ATTACK PHNOM PENH FRONTALLY, BUT WOULD ENFEEBLE IT UNTIL IT FELL INTO THEIR HANDS. THE FRENCH HAD NOTED THE BEGINNING OF PANIC AMONG THE BOURGEOISIE OF SAIGON AND THEY WERE PREPARING TO ISSUE VISAS TO A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF THE WEALTHY TO COME TO FRANCE. THE FRENCH HAD BEEN DISTURBED BY THE US PRESS STATEMENT ABOUT THE RECONVENING OF A VIETNAM CONFERENCE, BUT ASSUMED THAT THE REPORT WAS NOT ACCURATE SINCE THEY HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED. END SUMMARY.

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1. CAMBODIA: QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA BOLLE GAVE EMBOFF HIS USUAL TOUR D'HORIZON OF INDOCHINA MATTERS ON MARCH 24. THE CONVERSATION WAS PRINCIPALLY ABOUT CAMBODIA.

2. FRENCH CONTACTS WITH THE KHMER: BOLLE SAID THAT GOF GRADUAL ESCALATION IN ATTENDANCE AT THE GRUNK RECEPTIONS IN PARIS WAS A POLITICAL DECISION. IN PREVIOUS YEARS BOLLE WAS AT FIRST THE FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE, THEN FROMENT-MEURICE WITH BOLLE AND NOW THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, COURCEL, ATTENDED THE MARCH 20 GRUNK RECEPTION. AS WAS NOTED IN AFP AND FIGARO, THIS IS THE HIGHEST REPRESENTATION THE FRENCH HAVE TO DATE ACCORDED TO GRUNK REPRESENTATIVES. BOLLE EMPHASIZED HOWEVER THAT THE REPRESENTATION WAS STILL BELOW THE POLITICAL, THAT IS, CABINET, LEVEL. BOLLE SAID THAT HE HAD NOTHING TO ADD TO THE COMMENT MADE IN THE FIGARO ARTICLE: "THIS FACT (COURCEL'S ATTENDANCE AT THE RECEPTION) HAPPENING JUST AFTER THE EVACUATION OF THE DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL WHOM FRANCE HAD MAINTAINED UP TO THEN ACCREDITED TO MARSHAL LON NOL CAN BE CONSIDERED AS AN ADDITIONAL SIGN OF THE TURN TAKEN BY FRENCH DIPLOMACY IN THE DIRECTION OF THOSE WHO EVERYTHING NOW INDICATES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TOMORROW'S MASTERS OF CAMBODIA." BOLLE IMPLIED THAT THE COMMENT HAD BEEN INSPIRED BY THE QUAI.

3. GRUNK VIEWS: BOLLE SAID THAT HE HAD AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION AT THE RECEPTION WITH CHAN SENG AND PARTICULARLY OK SAKUN WHO HAD RECENTLY (MARCH 17) RETURNED FROM A TRIP TO PEKING. OK SAKUN SAID THE EVOLUTION IN CAMBODIA WAS VERY FAVORABLE FOR THEIR SIDE. THE GRUNK DOES NOT INTEND TO ATTACK DIRECTLY THE CITY OF PHNOM PENH BUT TO CONTINUE TO ENFEEBLE IT UNTIL IT FALLS INTO THEIR HANDS. THE GRUNK DID NOT NECESSARILY EXPECT TO ENTER PHNOM PENH DURING THE COURSE OF THE CURRENT DRY SEASON BUT NONETHELESS EXPECTED TO ATTAIN VICTORY SOON. SAKUN SAID, APPROPRIATE OF GRUNK POLICIES FOLLOWING THE SEIZURE OF POWER, THAT THEY WILL MAINTAIN THEIR CURRENT INDEPENDENT, NATIONAL POLICY AND INTENDED TO BE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL

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MASTERS OF THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. BOLLE COMMENTED THAT THE REMARK WAS CLEARLY DIRECTED AGAINST THE NORTH VIETNAMESE. SAKUN ALSO EMPHASIZED THEIR POLICY OF NONALIGNMENT, BUT NOTED, AS HAD SIHANOUK, THAT THIS NONALIGNMENT WOULD NOT BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THEIR POLICY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE OTHER INDOCHINESE PEOPLE IN THEIR STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM (THAT IS, WITH THE PRG AND LPF). SAKUN SAID THAT SIHANOUK WOULD RETURN TO PHNOM PENH "AS SOON AS THE

KHMERS ROUGES WERE IN PLACE."

4. FRENCH CONTACTS WITH SIHANOUK: BOLLE SAID THAT ARNAUD HAD PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS IN PEKING ONLY RECENTLY (MARCH 22) AND HE SHOULD NOW HAVE SOME TIME TO CULTIVATE THE KHMER. HE HAS THE SAME INSTRUCTIONS AS HIS PREDECESSOR TO SEE SIHANOUK, PENN NOUTH AND OTHER

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 07620

MEMBERS OF THE ENTOURAGE.

5. SITUATION IN VIETNAM: THE FRENCH WERE FOLLOWING CLOSELY AND WITH CONSIDERABLE ANGUISH THE EVOLVING SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM. IN GENERAL, THE REPORTS FROM THEIR EMBASSY IN SAIGON WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN THE WORLD PRESS. THEIR EMBASSY HAD ALSO REPORTED THE

BEGINNINGS OF A CERTAIN PANIC AMONG THE BOURGEOISIE OF SAIGON. THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN SAIGON WAS READYING ITSELF TO PROVIDE A LARGE NUMBER OF VISAS FOR THOSE WHO WOULD PROBABLY SOON DECIDE TO LEAVE VIETNAM. AS FOR FRENCH NATIONALS (INCLUDING THOSE TOTALLY OF VIETNAMESE RACIAL ORIGIN) THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD A PROGRAM WHICH WOULD PAY FOR THEIR TICKET TO FRANCE AND FOR THEIR LODGING UPON ARRIVAL HERE. AS FOR THOSE WITH VIETNAMESE NATIONALITY, THE FRENCH EXPECTED THAT ONLY THOSE WITH

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MONEY ALREADY IN FRANCE WOULD PROBABLY ATTEMPT TO MOVE HERE, AND THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS NO SPECIAL PROGRAM TO ASSIST THEM TO DEPART OR TO SETTLE IN FRANCE. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FRENCH CONCEPT OF POLITICAL ASYLUM, THEY WOULD BE GENEROUS WITH THEIR VISAS.

6. U.S. CALL FOR "VIETNAM CONFERENCE": THE FRENCH WERE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE AFP REPORT THE EVENING OF MARCH 21 THAT THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN, NESSEN, SAID THE U.S. HAD CALLED FOR THE RECONVENING OF "THE VIETNAM CONFERENCE." THE REPORTS DID NOT MAKE IT CLEAR WHETHER THE CALL WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN FOR US/DRV BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS, THE RESUMPTION OF 4 PARTY VIETNAM TALKS, OR THE RECONVENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VIETNAM. THE FRENCH WERE VERY RELIEVED TO READ IN THE MARCH 22 AFP THAT THE SPOKESMAN HAD "MIS-SPOKE." BOLLE HAD THOUGHT THAT AS THE HOST OF THE CONFERENCE, THE GOF WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSULTED PRIOR TO ANY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT. HE ALSO NOTED THE LACK OF ENTHUSIASM WHICH THE SECRETARY HAD SHOWN AT THE THOUGHT OF FURTHER TALKS ON INDOCHINA. HE HAD THEREFORE DOUBTED THE ACCURACY OF THE ORIGINAL AFP REPORT, BUT WAS REASSURED WHEN THE OFFICIAL DENIAL WAS PUBLISHED.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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